

CANNOT BE BEATEN.

EXPERIENCE WITH A NOTED AND SUCCESSFUL GAMBLER.

A Talk About "Straight" Games and "Crooked" — Robbing a Countryman. Wonderful Manipulation of Cards—A Faro Box for "Skin" Gambling.

I had an extraordinary experience a few days ago with one of the most noted and successful gamblers in America. We occupied adjoining chairs coming from Philadelphia, and we talked about gambling in New York on the way.

"I have heard a good many stories," I said, "of high playing up town within the past two weeks. Is it really so?"

"I have been in New York twenty-five years," said the gambler quietly, "and I have never known them to roll as high as they are rolling now. There is a combination of four Jews who are playing faro in a fashion that would make the old Mississippi gamblers hold their breath. Every bet is four figures, and they have crippled D—'s bank to the tune of \$50,000 in three nights. It is a curious thing, by the way, that nearly all Hebrews will bet recklessly on cards, though they are so cautious in business matters. They are in some respects the best gamblers I ever played against. If a Jew sees a chance of getting back a dollar by taking a risk, he will take the risk every time."

"Are most games straight now in New York?"

"I don't know a crooked game in the whole city. The fact is that gamblers have learned at last that it is just as easy to run straight as crooked. The percentage in favor of the house is enough to make any man rich if he sticks to the game. It is exactly like any other business. A merchant who is crooked will fail in the long run. There are a lot of flash man-shoe establishments along Broadway which show up in great shape for a year or two and then go under. They can't last if they are crooked. The straight houses come out ahead."

I mentioned the name a few moments later of a well-known actor, who has a predilection for high play, and the gambler said, with a chuckle:

"That particular actor made \$1,000 in the course of an hour a few nights ago."

"How?"

"A friend of his, a gambler in very hard luck, went to the actor and said he had a friend from out of town who was anxious to play against the bank, and he suggested that the actor and the other should go in and fleece him at faro. They went to a skin game on Sixth avenue and got him to open a faro bank with stacked cards, and about 11 o'clock at night the actor and the countryman came in together. They had agreed to pool their issues, and the actor put up \$1,000 against a similar amount by the countryman. They then took their \$2,010 and the actor agreed to do the playing. Within half an hour the money was all gone, the lights were turned out, and the countryman was sent on his way. Then the gambler went up to the actor to get his half of the money, but he got nothing. The actor took the \$1,000, gave the dealer \$50 for his trouble, and left town the following day \$750 ahead. The busted sport who engineered the whole thing has got his revenge by telling everybody about it."

If I were to give the name of the actor who indulged in this transaction it would cause an immense amount of astonishment, as his newspaper interviews are invariably full of bitter and heartfelt woe at the prevalence of gambling in America.

It occurred to me a little later that it was a good opportunity to introduce a man who had a system for beating games of chance to the gambler. I told him about my friend, and he said that no system was ever invented that could play successfully against luck.

"Well," said I, "the man whom I have in view has been sending me letters and telegrams about his particular discovery, and I would like to have you look at it."

"I will examine it with great pleasure," said the gambler, heartily, "if you will both come around to my hotel this afternoon, but I tell you beforehand that you will go away convinced that no system can play against a game in which chance figures as an important factor. I have been in this business a great many years, and I have made and lost many fortunes, so that I speak by the card."

At 5 o'clock that afternoon I telegraphed a man that had a new system (he is a colonel of militia), and we went together to the hotel. We were met by the sallow-faced man of chance, and he wandered up to his room ahead of us. He opened a little leather satchel, took out a faro box, put it on the table, and then brought out a number of cards with the seals still unbroken. I ought to state that the colonel's system had been tested with extraordinary success by all the devices that we could call to mind, and that he had continually and persistently come out ahead.

The gambler ran his slim fingers over the faro box and said:

"Do you think Herrman, Goldberg or Keller knew anything about cards? Because if you do I will prove to you that they are shoe-makers."

He then asked me to select a package of cards and shuffle them. I did so. "Now," he said, "name any card you please and you will find it between my hand and the chair."

"Any one of the fifty-two cards?"

"The eight of spades."

He shuffled the pack twice and then asked me to look on the chair. I did so and took the eight of spades from beneath his leg. He had found it and abstracted it from the pack while shuffling them and placed it there without our being able to detect him. He then amused and astonished us by forcing four kings or four aces to come to the top of the pack whenever he wanted them, although we shuffled the cards, and later he did what I consider the most extraordinary trick that can be performed in this world. He would take a fresh pack of cards and deal them rapidly in the regular way, except that he would deal us three hands precisely as we called for them. To do this he was obliged to read a backs of the cards and extract them from different places in the pack with such marvelous quickness that the eye could not follow him. After he had thus proved that no man could play with a professional gambler who had any wits, he was crooked, he took his faro box out and began to knock the colonel's system to splinters. Before he had operated five minutes the colonel slammed his fist on the table and said emphatically:

"I have seen enough to make me decide right here that I will never play another game of faro as long as I live."

The gambler could at will by touching certain springs in his box force all low cards or high cards to come up in turn, and, in fact, had as much command over the box as though that little silver device was human. Every card he called for came at his will, and men letting against him were entirely and utterly at his mercy. And yet the whole thing was so thoroughly innocent looking that it defied detection. I could not help wondering afterward whether there was more than one meaning in the emphasis he laid on the statement that all the gambling nowadays in New York is strictly honest and straight.—Pittsburgh Dispatch.

A LITTLE BOY JOCKEY.

Too Late at the Starting Post—Pluck, Energy and Skill Win at Last.

One of the most interesting features of the day was the conduct of a pretty little boy who appeared as a jockey. He was goodly dressed and his suit was evidently new. His name, as scribbled on the judge's slate, looked like Osber. He had a mount in the second race, and did little figuring in trying to secure a start. Nevertheless he looked "up to snuff," and many bet on his horse, believing that the little fellow knew all about riding. More than a dozen false starts were made. Finally, with his horse at the pole, the starter dropped the red flag and away went all but little Osber. He was evidently confused. The starter rapped the pole with his flagstaff and yelled "Go!" frantically in the jockey's ears, but the horse moved not. It was too late and the little fellow rode slowly to the paddock entrance, where he dismounted and burst into a storm of sobs.

Not a spectator laughed. Those who had bet on him swore a little, but the child's grief was too genuine to excite anything but pity. He had another mount in the fourth race, and many were the expressions of sympathy as he cantered by the grand stand in a warning-up heat before the call to the post. The time for the start came, and the little fellow's lips were shut close together as he held his horse with a stiff rein and furtively watched the rival jockeys. There were four starters. After several trials they got away all in a bunch. So closely were they bunched that when they came to the first turn, which was almost immediately, the four horses were wedged against each other, their sides and flanks steaming with the sudden and hot friction. The outside jockey was nearly thrown in the confusion. Osber had his horse next but one to the pole, and was badly squeezed by his rivals. With energy and skill that were really admirable, he pressed the spurs into his horse, and, leaning away forward, seemed to be helping her out of the ruck by main strength.

Stride by stride the animal pushed her nose to the fore, and when they were all past the turn, Osber was ahead at the much desired pole. But he was not pressed, and as he went flying past the grand stand on the first round his teeth were still shut closely together, and his face had an anxious look. The next time around he opened the distance between him and the second horse, and was sure of victory. His lips opened wide as he spurred his horse to further endeavor, and underneath his long visor the spectator could see the supplest expression that ever lit up a boy's eyes. Not satisfied with winning, he made his horse distance all the others, an excusable error under the circumstances. The crowd cheered heartily, and the losers in this event could not restrain a smile of sympathy at the boy's proud strut as he carried the bride at the side of the full-grown stable boy who bore the heavier burden of the saddle from the paddock.—Chicago Herald.

Creole Maiden in Society.

Three or four years spent in the convent, and mademoiselle La Creole is free. Perhaps before making her debut she studies under masters of music, languages, literature, and drawing for a year or more. Then she is permitted a formal entrance into society; she has crossed the flowery borders of girlhood, and has developed into a lovely young woman. There is fascination slumbering in her dark liquid eyes, as her fringed lids drooping over them soften but do not diminish their brilliancy. Her complexion has either an ivory pallor, or is of creamy whiteness absolutely dazzling, and of satiny texture, with hair black as the raven's wing. Her face has not much color save in her lips.

She is usually small, but rarely angular. Her limbs, however slender, are rounded, with peculiarly supple joints. Her gait is an undulating glide, due, say the anatomists, to the modifications climate has produced in the osseous formation of the creoles. No woman of her race can ever be seen walking, as so many American women walk, as if they were continually ascending stairs. As a rule, she will have magnificent hair. One wonders, in marking the luxuriance of these tresses, how the little heads contrive to carry such a weight. Very rarely indeed is a blonde seen among them, but they themselves fairly adore the Saxon type. With all her heart and soul the debutante enjoys the gayety into which she has plunged. Of dancing she never tires, and when *Leut* arrives it finds the ardor of her enthusiasm for balls, parties and musicales not one whit abated.—Harper's Bazar.

The Top of Washington Monument.

The construction of a suitable apex called forth much discussion and a number of plans. It was first suggested to roof over the structure with a framework of iron and glass; but it was thought that the chemical action of the weather on the metal would discolor the face of the walls. The design for a marble pyramidion fifty-five feet in height, submitted by Mr. Bernard R. Green, civil engineer, was finally adopted. Twelve stories, a foot thick, three on each side of the well, began to grow out from the face of the walls 470 feet from the base. As these are carried upward, the ribs nearest the angle of the shaft meet in the hips of the pyramidion, while those in the center of each face are connected still higher up by voussoir stones, forming two arches intersecting each other at right angles. The thrust of each corner rib is transmitted to its opposite by the use of horizontal stones between their upper extremities. The buttresses support the roof covering of marble slabs, about seven inches thick.

The capstone is tipped with an aluminum pyramid, which is connected by a copper rod with four lightning rods passing to the upper extremities of the iron columns of the elevator shaft, and the bottoms of these columns are grounded in the well in the center of the foundation.—Oscar Foote in American Magazine.

Long Summer Days in England.

The extreme brevity of the English summer nights always interests the stranger. It is not fully dark until nearly 11 o'clock, and reading is possible on a clear night up to nearly 10. The gray dawn begins to glimmer at about 2 in the morning, and by 3 it is quite light again. This doesn't seem to give the creatures that go to bed and get up with the sun time enough for rest. The roosters and such folk have a worn and sleepless look, and evidently suffer from insomnia. These brief nights, of course, are accompanied by a corresponding extraordinary length of days. We are accustomed to expect this sort of thing by hearsay in Norway, Sweden and Russia, but it seems at first novel and unfair to find an English speaking country blessed with such an extra quantity of daylight.—London Letter.

Frank D. Sherman's August Cherries. Frank D. Sherman has a poem on "August" in *St. Nicholas*, in which appear the lines:

August, month when sleepy cows seek the shade of spreading boughs, Where the robin quirts his head, Contemplating cherries red.

An August cherry must be a canned cherry or the robin must be fooling Mr. Sherman.—San Francisco Alta.

But wild cherries ripen in August, as any country schoolboy knows. The poet stands acquitted.

WONDERS OF ALASKA.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENERY OF THE INLAND PASSAGE.

Magnificent Appearance of the Coast Line—Visiting the Indian Cabins—A Place for Pioneer—The Wonderful Muir Glacier—Fall of Icebergs.

How shall any one describe the glories of the inland passage, with snow-capped mountains on the main and islands on the opposite side, rising often to the snow line, staying the mighty Pacific from rocking one's steamer; a twelve day trip and the total course of 2,300 miles from and return to Tacoma, W. T. Many a scene is like the Hudson at the Highlands; and many another like the Egean sea skirting the coast of Asia Minor; and still others like Switzerland's most beautiful mountain bound lakes; while the general combination, making a succession of beauties and sublimities, is purely Alaskan. Those who contentedly tucked themselves in their little beds along the Atlantic can have no idea of the republican magnificence of our beloved country as she stretches across the continent and reaches her fingers to Asia.

So many are the windings in the archipelago and mainland that in Alaska alone our country has 15,000 miles of sea coast. A large percentage of the coast line is precipitate from the water's edge, and is clothed with primeval forests of spruce, fir, pine, white odoriferous cedar, and adorned with arbutus and other gaudy hardy flowers. Of the inexhaustible fur seal, salmon and cod fisheries I need not speak, for they have a world wide fame.

The range of the passengers to visit the "ranches" or street of Indian cabins in each village where we land, and to purchase the wildest carvings or pictures from the most squalid surroundings, would prognosticate the grief of other travelers who should come here only after the Alaskans had entirely abandoned heathenism, which degrades them, and been exalted into American citizenship, for which so many of them are earnestly hoping. Totem poles, Chilcat blankets of Rocky mountain sheep's wool, black slate carvings, horn and bone spoons, painted dancing hats and masks, broadened moosehides, Esquimaux sealhide snow boots, pipes, war clubs, canoes, paddles, wood carvings, water tight red baskets, shags' teeth earrings and necklaces, gold and silver carved bracelets, finger rings, armlets, anklets, labrets or lip pins, with matting, gambling tools and the like, were absorbed by the passengers as readily as sunlight harmlessly drinks the miasma of swamps.

A PLACE FOR PIONEERS.

Were 50,000 of our ambitious tilters in the Empire city to start for Alaska with their wives, by either the Northern or Union Pacific railroad, and keep their eyes and ears open on the way, about 10,000 of them would reach here and make fortunes, and the rest would find openings en route for their talents and energies and create wealth for themselves all along or anywhere along the lines. But the cornerstone of this prosperity would be their taking their homes with them, a thing which can invariably be done by every man if he will. In times past the neglect of this excellence has turned too many of the pioneer settlers of our country into drunks, brigands, idlers and brutes. Men must carry something beside their cupidity and avarice; they must carry their dignity, purity and hope with them if they would be successful immigrants.

At Port Chester, on Annette Island, Alaska, is in process of receiving a thousand Christian industrious Indians from Metlakathla, in British Columbia, a settlement organized and instructed by William Duncan during an administration of twenty-six years, who now find themselves moving away from the unequal land laws of the Dominion and the ritualistic tyranny of the Anglican church, to seek religious liberty and equal rights in our dear country. We saw a little navy of six sail, constructed by an Indian boat builder, leave Metlakathla as the advance division of this movement, full of spirit and sober virtues. When settled they will raise the population of Alaska to 41,000.

The greatest natural wonder of this trip is Muir glacier, in Glacier bay. This glacier is about sixty miles long and five miles from the bay it is about twenty-five miles wide. In its course it is fed by nine principal and eleven lesser glaciers. This accumulated mass of ice moves by an inexorable law through a gate of mountains only two miles wide, piling and jamming itself up into towers and pyramids from three hundred to a thousand feet high, grinding the mountains till they have yielded it a sand beach of beauty and smoothness. The near mountains are from 2,500 to 4,000 feet high; Mount Grillon, ten miles away, is 16,000 feet, and Mount Fairweather, distant twenty-five miles, is 15,000.

FALL OF THE ICEBERGS.

At its projection into the sea the glacier travels at the rate of forty feet a day, availing itself of the bay with the sounds of thunder and earthquake. These retain the splendid blue tints of the parent glacier, when floating around us in great masses, some of them 400 feet square and standing from fifty to 100 feet out of the water. The fall of these icebergs rocks our boat like a storm, and we count twenty-six of them at one time. But the steamer fearlessly lies to within 600 feet of the place of metamorphosis from glacier to iceberg, her soundings with her longest line showing no bottom at 165 fathoms. When the iceberg is first weaned from the breast of the glacier it plunges almost out of sight in the sea, then rises to its full height, as if seeking to regain its place, and again sinks to rise again and again till it finally finds its equilibrium and is carried away by the wind or tide or both. This operation is stupendous and strikes awe into the soul, and yet casts such a weird magnificence of magnetism over the spirit that one leaves the Muir with regret.

What an improved American way of doing a glacier is this! Here there is no guide, no donkey, no carrying your own rations, no breathless climb, no diminutive *Mordre* Glacier, no loss of altitude, for everything is seen from sea level; no sleeping over night in a hospice or refuge at the half way point; but to be carried in ease and elegance to shake hands with the mighty glacier, to watch its operations from the cushioned saloon of a floating palace; this is the American way furnished to every comer by the Pacific Coast Steamship company. To land on the sandy beach and traverse the glacier is an inviting and easy essay, accomplished in a couple of hours; and men, women and children did more or less of it according to fancy. The Muir is the largest of five important glaciers, repaying the attention of the curious and scientific, every one of which surpasses in interest anything that Europe has to offer.—Elliott F. Shepard in New York Tribune.

A Lesson from Japan.

A lesson against the slaughter of birds comes from Japan. In that country insect pests have become so numerous that it is a custom to pluck the fruit for the market before it is ripe to prevent its destruction by insects.—Boston Budget.

New Orleans has a brass band of fourteen members that are all newboys.

IMMUNITY.

Leaf of the deep leaved chestnut tree, Long spared the weather god's disdain, Have not thy brothers borne for thee June's inevitable raging rain?

And they are beautiful and hale, Those sun-veined revelers; and thou still crippled, still afraid and pale, Sole discord of the singing bough!

—Louise Imogen Guiney in Lippincott's.

DEATH OF A WILDCAT.

A Typical Case of a Bank Failure Before the War.

As a typical case of the abjectest failure the Nemaha Valley bank of Brownville may be taken. After the time when the cashier, being reason to anticipate a run, had thoughtfully locked the front door and slipped out the back one, the editor of the Brownville Advertiser obtained leave to examine the books, and announced in the next issue of his paper that everything was sound, only time was needed. According to his account there was \$55,000 of the Nemaha Valley currency in circulation. The assets of the concern consisted of "stock notes," \$73,000; discounted paper at thirty and sixty days, over \$5,000; cash, over \$1,000. It surely required a western journalist, characteristically impressed with the need of maintaining public confidence, to state that such a condition of things indicated soundness.

Suppose, for instance, that it should transpire that the "stock notes" were virtually worthless. Such a thing was not uncommon, as the stockholders of the old state banks used often to "pay up" their capital by giving their personal notes, and then when occasion offered they could take measures to make these notes entirely worthless. Suppose, further, that the discounted paper had been received from those who were not reliable, at least in a financial crisis. Suppose also that the alleged "cash" consisted of the like of other banks as worthless as the one under investigation, and suppose, finally, that the books had been "fixed," and that in reality much more than \$55,000 of currency had been issued.

Such was very nearly the condition of the Nemaha Valley bank. The machinery of the courts was put in motion to enforce the redemption of the currency, and nearly \$1,000 of the old bills are stored among the records of the district court. Property was levied upon that usually turned out to belong to some one else, and finally the sheriff reports having levied upon and sold a safe, a table, a stove and a letter press, which altogether brought \$63. The last plea which the absent president ventured to make was, that the so-called "Nemaha Valley bank" could not be sued, since in reality it had not been legally incorporated at all.—Overland Monthly.

America and Australia.

I found myself constantly making comparisons and discovering similarities between America and Australia, though when I began to analyze the points of similarity they did not amount to much beyond wooden houses, trees, stacks of sawn timber, watermelons, bananas and sweet potatoes, close platted straw hats, and a general suggestion of bigness, freedom, uncles and don't careisms. It seemed to me as well that there was a likeness between the American type of character and the Australian. The same open air of honesty, and some of the same open air self assertiveness struck me; the same curious combination of utilitarianism and a spiritual, and the power of adaptability, particularly to be noticed in the women of both races—much, too, I thought, of the same originality and individual way of putting things; much also of the slavish adoration and imitation of everything English. But some cultivated Americans to whom I mentioned this fancy of mine did not take to the suggestion. I think that they looked upon Australia as still in a state of barbarism; whereas one of them assured me that American civilization was the concentrated result of deliberate selection from everything of good involved in the course of many centuries. Europe, he said, had created an experimental civilization; but America, meaning the United States, had taken hers ready made, and had improved upon it.—Temple Bar.

Book Stalls on Board Ship.

Nowhere is light literature in such request as on board ship, and yet to pan has been hit upon to reach the enormous floating readers of eager purchasers out of reach of the existing sources of supply. I see difficulties in the way, nor any reason why book stalls should not be opened on board passenger ships as well as at railway stations. Such a move in any disadvantageous way affect the economy of the ship or companies. From all I can hear from persons intimately acquainted with the working of passenger carrying steamers, it seems probable that shipowners would readily fall in with the plan, and organization offering to add very considerably to the convenience of the public who patronize them, giving every facility to any commercial enterprise of the description. It might require some time for the business to take hold and secure an extensive connection, such as would raise it to the position of a going concern. There would be features in the trade differing just so much from the railway department as to make a specialty of it; the management would have to devote them selves entirely to their particular branch, and the peculiarities of the business would soon become apparent to any bookseller not abnormally incapable. An experimental book stall or two set up on board Atlantic liners would perhaps be an advisable way of broadening the undertaking.—Pall Mall Gazette.

A Simple Test of Kerosene Oil.

Take an ordinary put tin cup. Fill it within an inch of the top with water warmed to the temperature of 120 degrees Fahr. Pour on this water three or four tablespoonfuls of the oil and water together, and wait a short time, say a minute or two, for the oil to collect on the top. Try the thermometer again, and if the temperature is more than one degree from 120 degrees Fahr. add a little cold or hot water, as the case may be, so as to bring the temperature within one degree of 120 Fahr. Then stir again and give time, as before, for the oil to come to the top. Now apply a burning match or lighted taper on a level with the top of the cup, say within half an inch of the oil. If within one second no flash occurs the oil is reasonably safe, otherwise it unsafe. Purchase four or five gallons of oil at a time and apply this test at each purchase.—Bulletin North Carolina State Board of Health.

A Rifle with Steel Bullets.

The French government is experimenting with a new rifle called the Pralon gun. The great advantage of the new weapon is a bullet of steel to replace that of lead. The steel bullet being much less in weight than the leaden would enable the soldier to carry a greater number of cartridges, which is of essential importance. It also increases the celerity of the bullet on leaving the gun, which circumstance decreases the curve made by the projectile and considerably reduces the jerk suffered by the gunner on discharging the weapon. These advantages are great. Nevertheless, the weapon has not yet been found perfect, and cannot yet be adopted. But it opens a new field of further improvements in gunnery.—Chicago News.

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